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ABSTRACT

At the present time the social sciences implicitly or explicitly start from a normative vision which has a dialectical objective: a reasoning that is at once theoretical and practical, or that is both a political and a scientific discourse. A focus on Jurgen Habermas' theory of communicative action provides possibilities of shifting the frontier to interactive planning that explicitly takes up the problem of the relationship between authority and society. The theories and concepts of other European thinkers like Althusser, Gramsci, Lukacs, Weber, and Foucault, are also important for an understanding of the Western European intellectual climate. Habermas's theory envisions a number of new, collective decision-making forms. It must be seen as a directive for a new political praxis, a criterion against which the organization of both the political and the social life can be tested and judged. However, the political relevance of this third paradigm (emerging from criticism of the modernization and dependency paradigms) as a realistic counter-strategy has a chance to succeed only if an organic bond can be forged internationally between the grass-roots movement in the West and in the Third World. 'Networking' may be a crucial step towards its materialization. As a step towards this, the participants at a 1986 conference on Communication, Development and Human Rights held in Rome, recommended that transnational networks of communication, solidarity, and support be developed between local and national groups and organizations to give some protection to vulnerable groups. (Fifty-five references are attached.) (RAE)

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COMMUNICATION, DEVELOPMENT, AND NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENTS
A European Perspective

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"Moderne Gesellschaften verfugen uber drei Ressourcen, aus denen sie ihren Bedarf an Steuerungsleistungen befriedigen konnen: Geld, Macht und Solidaritat. Deren Einflusspharen mussten in eine neue Balance gebracht werden. Damit will ich sagen: die sozialintegrative Gewalt der Solidaritat musste sich gegen die 'Gewalte' der beiden anderen Steuerungs-ressourcen, Geld und administrative Macht, behaupten konnen. Nun waren Lebensbereiche, die darauf specialisiert sind, tradierte Werte und kulturelles Wissen weiterzugeben, Gruppen zu integrieren und Heranwachsende zu sozialisieren, immer schon auf Solidaritat angewiesen. Aus derselben Quelle musste aber auch eine politische Willensbildung schopfen, die auf die Grenzziehung und den Austauch zwischen diesen kommunikativ strukturierten Lebensbereichen auf der einen, Staat und Okonomie auf der anderen Seite Einfluss nehmen soll. Das liegt ubrigens nicht weit ab von den normativen Vorstellungen unserer Sozialkundelehrbucher, nach denen die Gesellschaft uber demokratisch legitimierte Herrschaft auf sich selbst und ihre Entwicklung einwirkt".

Jurgen Habermas (1986:158)

Most authors distinguish between two views or paradigms on communication and development; that is, 'modernization and growth' versus 'dependency and underdevelopment'. While the former claims that the problem of underdevelopment can be solved by a more or less mechanical application of the economic and political system in the West to countries in the Third World,the latter argues that development and underdevelopment are interrelated processes and therefore must be understood in the context of the world system. This view has been strengthened as the present worldwide crisis shows the degree to which the world economy has become a reality. The need for a more global analysis became apparent.

Therefore, I have argued in favor of a third paradigm on development and communication, which I have termed 'multiplicity in one world'. Contrary to the more economic and political oriented views of the modernisation and dependency theories, the central idea in this emergent third

paradigm is that there is no universal path to develpment, that development must be conceived as an integral, multidimensional and dialectic process which can differ from one community to another. In other words, every nation must find its own strategy.

At the same time, this also implies that the problem of development is a relative one, and no part of the world can claim to be developed in all respects. Therefore, the discussion on the degree and scope of inter(in)dependence is connected with the content of development. According to this view 'another' development could be defined as need-oriented, endogenous, self-reliant, ecologically sound and based on participatory democracy and structural transformations.(for more details, see Servaes 1986a, 1986b, 1987).

In the above publications I have also argued that each paradigm has fundamentally contrary policy and planning implications both at national (inward) and international (outward) levels. In my opinion most Western governments, transnationals, academicians, policymakers, as well as the public at large, continue to look at development and communication from a modernization perspective. It emphasizes economic growth, and explains the state of 'underdevelopment' as a mainly internal Third World problem. Underdevelopment can therefore be solved by external, technological 'aid'.

After briefly summarizing the basic characteristics of this so-called multiplicity paradigm, I will try to present a number of Western European contributions which, in my opinion, underlie this new perspective on communication and development. Theories and concepts like Althusser's Ideological State Apparatuses, Poulantzas's economic-political-ideological class- and state-concept, the Gramscian study of historical social formations and his focus on hegemony, the Lukacsian problematic of revolutionary class consciousness as the key to social change, Foucault's theses on the order of discourse and power in society, the Weberian

view on legitimation, and elements from semiotics and psychoanalysis, are, in my opinion, essential for an understanding of the nowadays Western European intellectual climate. I will particularly focus on the German scholar Jurgen Habermas's contributions in this respect.

One world, many cultures

The new, so-called multiplicity approach on development emerged from the criticism of the modernisation and dependency paradigms. The common starting point here is the examination of the changes from a 'bottom-up' perspective, from the self-development, self-creation or self-organization of the local community. The basic assumption is that there are no nations that function completely autonomously and that are completely self-sufficient, nor are there any nations whose development is exclusively determined by external factors. Every community is dependent in one way or another, both in form and in degree. Thus, one sought a framework within which both the so-called Center and Periphery could be studied separately and in their mutual relationship.

The impetus for this new approach stems from at least two interdisciplinary theories: the mainly economic world system analysis and the anthropological 'coupling' of production forms approach. A fascinating integration of these two approaches is given by Osvaldo Sunkel and Edmundo Fuenzalida (1980) with their so-called 'transnationalization thesis', which can be summarized in four points: (a) The capitalist system has changed from an international to a transnational structure with the transnational corporations as the most significant actors. (b) The most striking feature of the actual system is the polarized development of transnationalization on the one hand, and national desintegration on the other. (c) Of particular interest is the emphasis on culture which is the main stimulator of a new transnational community of people from different nations, but

with similar values and ideas, as well as patterns of behaviour. (d) At the same time the national societies are generating a variety of counter processes that assert national and/or subnational values, sometimes reactionary, sometimes progressive. It is a matter of multiple dynamic: in the margin of the capitalist system, all kinds of pre-or non-capitalistic organizational patterns maintain their own coherency and significance. In other words, the concentration on this dialectic relation between (mainly transnational) integration and (mainly national) desintegration leads to liberative as well as oppressive processes on several levels of a particular nation. For more details I refer to Servaes (1987) where I combined an adjusted version of Sunkel and Fuenzalida's transnationalization thesis with Johan Galtung's (1979, 1980) six types or aspects of (possible) dependent relationships in order to achieve a conceptual framework for the analysis of relationships between processes of integration, desintegration and re-integration at the various level of a specific societal system, and for the study of the internal versus external variables and/or positive versus negative factors which determine the processes of power and empowerment in society.

It is not surprising that this view prevails among anthropologists, especially those who are doing research in Africa (Fonkoue, 1985; Meillassoux, 1986; Rey, 1976). For it is precisely in Africa where old forms of organization, however much transformed, still seem to form a real 'obstacle' to the effects of capitalist relationships. These forms of economic organization and production are often defined by the term 'conviviality'. In this respect, two research areas from the work of these anthropologists are important: their studies on the organization and development of local groups, communities and social structures in general; and their analyses of the so-called 'informal sectors' in society. They stress the special autonomy of superstructural institutions in the pre-capitalist forms of

production and also the coupling of forms of production and its particular role after decolonization has gained the upper hand. From this, it appears that all kinds of non-economic factors, such as cultural principles like kinship and religion, that gave the old forms of production form still have a direct influence in this coupling.

Power and empowerment

Another definition of the power concept is essential for this new approach. This perspective on power relationships has been advocated by critical social-philosophers and post-structuralists, like Pierre Bourdieu (1979, 1980, 1981), Michel Foucault (1966, 1975, 1977, 1980), Anthony Giddens (1979, 1981,1984), and Jurgen Habermas (1981, 1985, 1986) (see also Servaes, 1988).

Contrary to the traditional, static interpretation of the power concept which refers to material or immaterial perceived 'possessions' in a narrow as well as a broad meaning, these authors argue that the relationship between power and conflict is of an accidental nature. They do not deny the fact that the exercise of power is an assymetrical phenomenon, but believe that power is 'all-embracing' and 'all-mighty' and has to be coupled with the concept of 'interest'. Therefore, as argued explicitly by Foucault, power has to be seen as the form of a subjectification and objectification. Power is a matter of domination over others, in stead of a capacity to control things. As coercion implies freedom, power is only exercised over free subjects and only insofar as they are free. Not only is power ubiquitous; it is also anonymous and comprehensive. Therefore, it both 'produces' and 'represses': "What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be considered as a productive

network which runs through the whole social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is repression" (Foucault, 1980: 119).

In other words, power is a dual concept that can be interpreted in two ways. Looking at it in a static way there are those who have power and those that endure power. But interpreted in a dynamic way one could say that even the powerless exercise power over the powerful. The elites or powerholders in society rule by virtue not only of their control over the means of production but also of their ability to create 'legitimation'. Together with economic preponderance, the dominant classes call upon an ideological and symbolic preponderance not only to maintain their position in the social hierarchy but also to justify it. This symbolic system has a 'symbolic power' because it is capable of construing reality in a directed manner. This power lies not in the symbolic system itself, but in the social relationship between those who exercise the power and those who are subject to it. Pierre Bourdieu defines it as a "habitus" which guarantees the reproduction of objective as well as subjective structures. He points out that every symbolic system is determined in two ways: by the general consistencies of the material production and the objective class oppositions that are a reflection of it; and by the specific subjective interests of those who produce the symbolic system and those who are subjected to it. Symbolic power functions 'unconsciously', 'spontaneously' and 'voluntarily' as the legitimation criterion for the existing social and economic power relationships and leads to a hierarchy of cultural 'tastes' and 'ways of life'.

Hegemony and power therefore functions in two ways: the economic ability to produce goods and services; and the ideological ability to reproduce society as a legitimate entity. Elites decline because they are not longer able to regenerate the sources of their legitimacy. Consequently, the functioning of ideologies should be perceived as ongoing

social processes in the organization and maintenance of power.

Ideology and counter-ideology

The concept of ideology is equally important for a correct appreciation of this new perspective. A general definition of ideology may sound like "Weltanschauungen that legitimize power" (Guess, 1981). However, there are more specific interpretations possible, according to the contexts in which the term is used. Let me clarify this by taking Jurgen Habermas's views on ideology as an example. One can distinguish between three 'phases' in Habermas's stance concerning ideology and the critique of ideology: a methodological, a linguistic and a more content related one.

In his "Erkenntnis und Interesse" (1968), Habermas attempted to formulate a critical theory (including a critique of ideology) building on a psychoanalytical model which he called 'knowledge constitutes interest in self-reflection'. The context in which he outlined this model, which actually stems from Karl-Otto Apel, is the 'Verstehen/Erklaren'-controversy. In ideology-critique and psychoanalysis, information about unknown or 'hidden' motives is used to explain a person's behavior. If the information can be handled down to the 'patients', they may reach a greater insight in themselves. In other words, they are faced with the 'hidden' unconscious/ideological motives which determine their behavior.

There has been a lot of critique on this model. The main lines of critique concern the conflation of two notions of 'self-interest', i.e. a Kantian-transcendental (used in the category 'knowledge constitutes interest in self-reflection'), and an empirical one (used in the theory of psychoanalysis and 'Ideologiekritik'). Thomas McCarthy (1978) provided a very good assessment of this 'problematic' to

which Habermas subscribed in the forword of the new edition of "Theorie und Praxis" (1971).

Nevertheless, in his critique of Gadamer's hermeneutics ('Der Universalitatsanspruch der Hermeneutik'), Habermas continued to use this earlier model. However, he gradually outlined the contours of a new one based on the notion of a 'Herschaftsfreie Dialog' (power-free dialogue). This new model reappears in "Legitimationsprobleme" (1973), in which it is called 'the advocatory model of the critique of ideology'. The model rests upon his theory of 'universal pragmatics' or the 'theory of communicative action'. Habermas claims that we presuppose in every communicative action a 'counter-factual' situation of 'power-free communication'. In such a situation, one assumes that people can reach an 'unbiased' consensus about moral norms. However, ideologies, understood in the sense of Weltanschauungen with legitimate power, 'distort' this situation. People 'think' they reach a 'free consensus', but in fact it is a consensus 'within an ideology'. In other words, a consensus which does not problematize the power relations in which it is reached. In this model 'Ideologiekritik' means 'measuring' the actual consensus in a situation of communicative action against the possible consensus which could be reached if the communicative situation was 'power-free' (i.e., the critique of ideology as an 'advocate' of the 'Herschaftsfreie Dialog'). Disco (1979) and Gouldner (1979) have been criticizing this concept of power-free dialogue as the ideology of the so-called new class of intellectuals.

In his magnum opus, "Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns" (1981), Habermas states that a critique of ideology is no longer possible, because in a 'communicatively rationalised world' total Weltanschauungen are no longer thrustworthy. The French philosopher Jean-Francois Lyotard (1979) would say that people have become too rational to believe in 'meta-recits' ('big stories' which legitimize power or protest). We therefore no longer need a theory of

ideology which is able to capture the totality of a Weltanschauung, Habermas states, but rather have to look for a theory of the fragmented consciousness. People are no longer 'moved' by ideological motives. What is wrong with them nowadays is that they no longer have the necessary knowledge/consciousness to understand their 'life world' (cf. infra). Their consciousness has become 'scattered', they are no longer able to get a 'total outlook' on the world they live in. And therefore, they don't even 'see/observe/feel' the 'colonization of their life-world'. So, this colonization is not hidden 'within' an ideology, it is recognizable ... but people just don't have the 'necessary consciousness' to 'see' it. (For more details, see Servaes, 1981c).

The colonization of the life world

To better illustrate that latter perspective, let me elaborate on the viewpoints of Jurgen Habermas in this respect. The two basic concepts of Habermas's new research program are 'rationality' and 'communication'. The fundamental question of how a social order is possible can, he contends, be answered by refering to the common definitions of reality that are created in the everyday communication. Normative elements play a role here in two ways. First, these common definitions of reality are not only related to the objective data of the situation in which the social actors are located, but also to the norms that apply obligatorily to them and the veracity of their expressions. Second, mutual agreement is developed in the everyday intercourse by the introduction of reference frames that are, in principle, open to criticism. Communitative action is, thus, internally related with symmetrical, power-free argumentation, with discussion on the tenability of 'validity claims', propositions that assume that arguments are made in a 'true, 'correct' and 'honest' way.

Modern societies are characterized by polarization of two domains: first, the 'life world' (Lebenswelt) -- i.e., the private spheres, which depend on communicative action and dialogical discourse --, and, second, the 'systems' of the economy and the state, which rest on goal-oriented, rational action and are dominated by money and power. The independence of the two domains with respect to each other that has emerged in Western societies and that seems to be spreading throughout the world must, according to Habermas, be judged in principle positively because this independence forms the basis for the material reproduction of societies. Under capitalistic relationships, however, this independence of the economy and the state with respect to the life world has been matched by a kind of 'colonization of the life world' by these independent subsystems. Habermas intends by this that the economy and the state violently penetrate the life world, and there intervene with money and power in problems that only can be resolved by communicative action, that is, by means of dialogical discourse and mutual accord.

The new social movements in the West, such as the women's movement, the environmental movement, and the peace movement, are not primarily oriented to problems that concern the distribution of material wealth but resist to this colonization of the life world. They advocate a society where the blind dynamic and the imperialism of the independent subsystems of economy and state are subject to the normative restrictions of a life world in which communication processes can develop again in full freedom.

While Habermas expresses sympathy for the possibilities of modern subjectivity, especially French post-structuralists take a rather pessimistic stand. They express serious doubts about the dialectic character of rationality and envision subjects to be conditioned by the mechanisms of the 'all-embracing' power. Therefore, for instance Bourdieu, unlike Habermas, is extremely skeptical about the possibilities of a 'power-free communication'. For Bourdieu, language is not

a means for achieving consensus but one of the forms in which the borders between the different classes are set. These borders are, as it were, frozen in the thought of the citizen so that no politically desirable course changes can be achieved via 'communicative acton'. For more details, see Bernstein (1985), Crespi (1987), Pasewark (1986), Schmidt (1982), Thompson (1983, 1984), or Wuthnow (1985).

New social movements

Although the above mentioned Western European scholars in general, and Habermas in particular, mainly focus on modern Western societies, I contend that their theoretical insights transcend this context and have a more global or universal 'appeal' (see also Friberg, 1985; Morley, 1988; Touraine, 1985). Therefore, I have advocated a more dialectic and multi-centered perception of power factors in the context of communication and development which also takes counter-power or empowerment from a bottom-up or grassroots perspective into account. In general, one can distinguish between three problem areas in regard to power relationships: the mutual dependency between the macro-level of the society or a given system and the micro-level of the social actions involved; the position and the autonomy of the subject, and the relationship of domination, dependency and subordination of power and interest contrapositions. The main factors of this new perspective are social movements with a concern for multiple public issues like ecology, social justice, peace, education, civic action, etc. Instead of one central, objective, and mainly economic 'conflict', several segmented, subjective and 'postmaterialistic' issues can be identified. Instead of one central collective actor (the proletariat or exploited class), several different, sometimes opposing collective actors can be identified.

However, social movements are defined less by what they oppose, than what they propose. For instance, Klaus Eder

(1985:874) defines them as "systems of action which create themselves (and) can be understood as autopoietic systems which make the capacity of communicative conflict resolution the mechanism of their self-organization". This type of social groupings transcends the notion of political parties as traditionally understood and conceived. The guiding principle of these social movements is to proceed from the grassroots upwards, from a bottom-up perspective, rather than from the top downwards as is the case in the classic power structure which disregards the views of the masses and is therefore elite-oriented. In other words, the goal of these social movements is political in the old sense of the word. For more details, see Brand (1985), Held (1987), Japp (1986), Lau (1985), Miller (1986), Sankiaho (1984),

The ambivalence of mass communication

Most international communication scholars who continue to work within the modernization or dependency perspective take for granted that together with the huge volume of western communication messages a western political and economic ideology and culture will be introduced simultaneously. Such a view ignores some of the basic truths about communication, as they are developed in the multiplicity paradigm. Far from being a top-down phenomenon only, foreign mass media interact with local networks in what can be named a 'coerseductive' (for coercion/seduction) way, and therefore have radically different effects and meanings in different cultural settings. Far from being passive recipients, audiences are actively involved in the construction of meaning around the media they consume.

At a more theoretical level, also Habermas's theory of communicative action reveals the ambivalent character of mass communication. On the one hand, media create an hierarchicalization of the communicative processes because they create lines of communication from the Center to the

Periphery and from top to bottom. But, on the other hand, the mass media are directly linked to the rational structure of the communicative action. They are not detached from it, like the subsystems of power and money, but they embody generalized forms of communication. In so doing, they remain, for their functioning, ultimately dependent on bipolar positions of communicatively gifted actors. Herein, according to Habermas, lies their ambivalence, which was not perceived by the Frankfurt School. A pluralistic and democratic use of mass media is far from being achieved at this time, he states, but it does belong to the real possibilities of the mass media.

In reality one can observe similar interrelated developments. On the one hand there is a tendency to import cultural content and develop local imitations, on the other hand many Third World communicators and organisations are using the imported media technologies to attempt to forge a more autonomous culture, independent of, but at the same time borrowing from the western culture. The idea of international media software convergence is therefore rendered weak. Furthermore, as is the case in the West, one observes that in spite of the better production quality the majority of local audiences prefer programmes produced in their own culture. This happens for at least two reasons, namely language and cultural affinity. Therefore, media can as well have a 'boomerang effect', conveying precisely the opposite consequence to that presumed by purveyors or observers on the surface.

An important transition taking place in many countries is the proliferation of traditional culture at grass-roots levels. 'Traditional' should not only be viewed in a 'conservative' way but may also have 'progressive' connotations. Therefore one can observe the growth of dualistic communication structures. Adaptation of traditional media for education and social action are encouraged because of their cultural values and their inexpensiveness. A

logical approach for societies and cultures that are concerned about the hegemony of culturally-imperialistic western media therefore could be to develop sets of 'alternative', 'countercultural' or 'de-mythologizing' integrated media that could use external media technologies and products for radically different purposes.

By way of conclusion

The nowadays social sciences do not only study society but also intend to transform it. Implicitly or explicitly they therefore start from a normative vision which has a dialectical objective: a reasoning that is at once theoretical and practical, or that is both a political and a scientific discourse. As Marin (1978) points out, the very title of Thomas More's "Utopia" -- 'The best state of a commonwealth, and the new island of Utopia' -- refers to this relationship of political analyses with utopian descriptions.

In general Habermas's theory of communicative action could provide possibilities of shifting the frontier to interactive planning that explicitly takes up the problem of the relationship between authority and society. More particularly, it envisions a number of new, collective decision-making forms. In this sense, this theory offers no task that is strictly and forever defined. Rather, it must be seen as a directive for a new political praxis, a criterion against which the organization of both the political and the social life can be tested and judged.

However, as I pointed out in Servaes (1986a:225), "the political relevance of this third paradigm as a realistic counter-strategy has a chance to succeed only if an organic bond can be forged internationally between the grass-roots movement in the West and in the Third World". 'Networking' may be a crucial step towards its materialization. Therefore, the participants at a conference on Communication, Development and Human Rights, held in Rome in April 1986,

jointly organized by the Society for International Development, the Inter Press Service, the International Documentation Center, and the Human Rights & Information Documentation Systems, recommended "that transnational networks of communication, solidariry and support be developed between local and national groups and organizations in order to break the barriers of silence and isolation and to give some protection to vulnerable groups" (see XXX, 1986).

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